

NEWS ADVISORY
Montreal Protocol Negotiation Summary

Open-Ended Working Group
June 27-30, 2005

Second Extraordinary Meeting of the Parties
July 1, 2005

U.S. Growers Granted Methyl Bromide for 2006 Critical Uses As Annual Requests Decline

At the Second Extraordinary Meeting, the Parties to the Montreal Protocol authorized fully 90 per cent of the amount requested by the United States to meet critical needs of U.S. growers as they transition to ozone-safe alternatives. Specifically, the Parties authorized an additional 1177 metric tonnes (or 5 percent of 1991 baseline consumption, which is 25,528 metric tonnes) of methyl bromide for critical use exemptions for agricultural uses in the United States for the 2006 calendar year. Previously, at their 16th annual meeting in November, 2004, the Parties had authorized 6898 metric tonnes, or 27 percent of the U.S. 1991 baseline for the 2006 calendar year. This total authorization of 8075 metric tonnes amounts to 32 percent of 1991 baseline consumption for 2006. EPA will allocate these quantities to users with critical needs through a notice-and-comment rulemaking process.

Methyl bromide is used to fumigate soil before planting crops such as strawberries and tomatoes, as well as to fumigate stored commodities and grain mills. However, it is also classified as a Class I ozone-depleting substance. The United States is committed to phasing out methyl bromide as alternatives become available.

The critical use exemption process was established to provide relief to methyl bromide users who do not have any technically and economically feasible alternatives. Under the current structure of the Protocol, the Parties to the treaty authorize exemptions on an annual basis, and each year EPA promulgates a rule to allocate methyl bromide for critical uses. Methyl bromide allocations are strictly regulated and monitored by EPA.

The U.S. request for critical use exemptions has declined since 2005, reflecting some increased use of alternatives. The U.S. remains within the cap set by the treaty and has substantially reduced methyl bromide consumption since the early 1990s.

For the 2005 calendar year, the U.S. was granted a total of 37.5 percent of baseline, reflecting a supplemental amount authorized in November, 2004. EPA is undergoing the notice and comment rulemaking process to make these the supplemental quantities available for critical uses.

More information on the methyl bromide critical use exemption process is available at <http://www.epa.gov/ozone/mbr> .